

**Amendments to the claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS**

1-32. (canceled)

33. (new) A method for preventing the initiation, development, or progression of melanoma comprising administering to a patient in need thereof a compound that is an endothelin B receptor (ETB) specific antagonist. (p. 15, lines 9-21; p. 19, line 30 to p. 21, line 19; p. 24, lines 9-28)

34. (new) A method for preventing the initiation, development, or progression of a melanocyte or melanocyte-related cell into a melanoma cell in a patient in need thereof comprising administering to the patient a compound that is an ETB specific antagonist. (p. 15, lines 9-21; p. 19, line 30 to p. 20, line 18; p. 24, lines 9-28)

35. (new) The method of claim 34 wherein the melanocyte or melanocyte-related cell displays an alteration in one or more of the following: cell growth, cell-to-cell interaction, cellular membrane content, cytoskeletal structure, protein secretion, gene expression, or cell mortality. (p. 1, line 29 to page 2, line 2)

36. (new) The method of claim 34 wherein the patient displays one or more atypical moles. (p. 18, lines 5-6)

37. (new) The method of claim 33 wherein said ETB specific antagonist is selected from the group consisting of a peptide inhibitor, a small molecule inhibitor, and an ETB antibody.

38. (new) The method of claim 34 wherein said ETB specific antagonist is selected from the group consisting of a peptide inhibitor, a small molecule inhibitor, and an ETB antibody.

39. (new) A method for preventing the initiation, development, or progression of melanoma comprising administering to a patient in need thereof a compound that is an

endothelin B receptor (ETB) specific antagonist, wherein said ETB specific antagonist is selected from the group consisting of a peptide inhibitor, a small molecule inhibitor, and an ETB antibody.

40. (new) The method of Claim 39 wherein the usefulness of said ETB specific antagonist for the treatment of melanoma is evaluated by an *in vitro* assay comprising:

- a) contacting a cell expressing ETB and E-cadherin with endothelin and the compound; and
- b) determining the level of E-cadherin expression,

wherein if the level of E-cadherin expression in cells contacted with endothelin in the absence of the compound is decreased compared to the level of E-cadherin expression in cells contacted with endothelin and the compound, the compound has usefulness for the treatment of melanoma.

41. (new) A method for preventing the initiation, development, or progression of melanoma comprising administering to a patient in need thereof an ETB specific antagonist selected from the group consisting of BQ788, IRL-1038, and RES-701-1.

42. (new) A method for preventing the initiation, development, or progression of melanoma comprising administering to a patient in need thereof a compound that prevents the downregulation of E-cadherin in a melanocyte or melanocyte-related cell, wherein said compound is an ETB specific antagonist selected from the group consisting of a peptide inhibitor, a small molecule inhibitor, and an ETB antibody, wherein said melanocyte or melanocyte-related cell treated with said ETB specific antagonist has a level of E-cadherin similar to a second melanocyte or melanocyte-related cell treated with BQ788 as evaluated by an *in vitro* assay comprising:

- a) contacting a first melanocyte or melanocyte-related cell expressing ETB and E-cadherin with endothelin and said ETB specific antagonist;
- b) contacting a second melanocyte or melanocyte-related cell expressing ETB and E-cadherin with endothelin and BQ788; and
- c) determining the level of E-cadherin expression in said first and second contacted melanocytes or melanocyte-related cells,

wherein if the level of E-cadherin expression in said first melanocyte or melanocyte-related cell is similar to the level of E-cadherin expression in said second melanocyte or

melanocyte-related cell, then the compound shows usefulness for the treatment of melanoma.